

# HINDUISM

IN

the light of Visishtadvaitism

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BEING

**Lectures delivered in the Inter-Religious League**

BY

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# HINDUISM AS FOLLOWED BY THE VISISHTADVAITIN<sup>\*</sup>

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## PART I

### Visishtadvaitic School of Thought.

It is a most daring act that I have undertaken to place before you some ideas on the doctrines of a great school of thought. Our friends in the league, belonging to different persuasions have each placed before us very illuminating pictures of their respective religions. Every one of them is well versed in his religion and he has had the additional advantage that his religious literature is in a narrow compass. I am attempting a task which the most learned Pandits would begin with diffidence and my acquaintance with the literature relating to the theme is a mere speck in an ocean. However I trust that what little I may say will be sufficient for earnest seekers after knowledge and truth to desire for more of that fountain. Unlike other religions Hindu religion is so intermingled with every aspect of individual as well as social and political life that it is often difficult to draw the line between religion proper and rules of conduct laid down in the name of religion.

### Three entities.

There are three entities which in our religion are steady factors viz, God, soul and matter or *prakriti*. All the three form inseparable elements of one. Soul cannot exist without matter and the two together cannot

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\* Lecture delivered before the Inter Religious League, Chittoor.

exist without God, and the three together forming one whole, the school of thought that holds this view is designated as Visishtadvaita. It is *advitryam*. It is one and not two and still that one is made up of the three, a unity of trinity and therefore it is known as Visishtadvaitam

### God or Universal Soul.

Hindu religion is essentially a mono-theistic and not polytheistic religion as critics with imperfect knowledge characterise it to be. There is only one God and not too many gods. There is no doubt the recognition in Hinduism of a celestial or spiritual hierarchy and ignorant men believe this as the polytheism of the Hindu religion. Now with the school of thought I am to-day concerned with, God is a personal God as in the case of several religions on the globe. God has the highest attributes and on that account He is spoken of as *Shadguna Brahman*. As good attributes are called good only by relativity of human knowledge and as God may also be viewed in the abstract without the human imperfection of knowledge by relativity, some prefer to call God as *Nirguna Brahman*. In my opinion both come to the same thing in the end as the view-point differs and not the essence. God then is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world manifestations. Here again the terminology Brahma, the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and Siva the destroyer, if correctly understood represent the same one God that the school postulates with functional variations. God as the supreme universal soul has one supreme attribute which is described in Hindu religion as *sarvāntaryāmitwam* which was translated very appropriately by the Rev. Dr. Miller as "Omnipenetrativeness" in his renowned lectures on the Place of Hinduism in the story of the world. "*Antarbahuscha-*

*tatsravam vyapya Narayana sthitaha.*" God is unchanging, without limitations and imperfections. I said that God is described as *Shadguna Brahmam*. This means that he has six good attributes. They are generally known as *jñāna*, *bala*, *aishvarya*, *virya*, *śakti* and *tejas*. These are attributes necessary for the three functions of creation, sustentation and destruction. There is another set of qualities viz., *kṛpā* or mercy, *ratsalya* or love, *saṅgahya* or accessibility, *saṅsṛya* or purity and *audarya* or generosity. These are qualities of God by which the individual souls are attracted to him and attain their salvation. These two kinds of attributes which the mighty God possesses are used in forms which are described as five forms of God. *Para*, *vyūha*, *vibhava*, *hārda* and *archa*. That one Personal God whom I spoke of is said to be in the unchanging *para* form i.e., ultra transcendent form and is located in the world known as Sri Vaikuntham, which is made of *suddhasatvam* or ultra-subtle matter as distinguished from the gross matter that we see. The latter is called *misrasatvam* or mixed matter. The bliss in that heaven is known as *nityānubhūti* as distinguished from the happiness of the world known as *līlānubhūti*. With the Hindu it must be remembered that whether it is eternal bliss or changing bliss all belongs only to God and not to man. The *jīvan* or the individual soul and the matter or *prakṛti* are together merely the body or *sarvā* or *vishvānā* of God—the universal soul. It is God that enjoys the eternal bliss or the mixed bliss through the *jīvas*. The form which God assumes in the three functions known as *sṛṣṭi* creation, *sthiti* or sustentation and *laya* or destruction is called the *vyūha* form. In the act of creation He is described by the name Pradyumna and in this, two of the

first set of qualities operate, *anuvarya* and *virya*. In the act of sustentation two other of the first set of qualities come into play. They are *sakti* and *tejas* and this form is described as Aniruddha. In the act of destruction two other qualities have their use viz., *gnana* and *bala*. In this form He is known as Sankarshana. Then another form of God that I referred to was the *vibhava* form. In this state God is said to be incarnate. I use the term incarnation for want of a suitable word in the English language corresponding to the sublime words *vibhava* or *avatara*. In fact all the English words that I have been using for the Sanskrit words of the holy texts are extremely poor renderings of the sublimity conveyed by every one of the terms found in the holy texts. The language of the materialists cannot give a dictionary for spiritualism. Now in this form of God known as *vibhava* or *avatara* all the good qualities of the second type viz., *kripa*, *vatsalya*, *sousilya* etc., are all manifested. It is said in Bhagavad Gita why God appears on the material earth very often. It is said.

పరిత్రాణాయ సాధూనాం విశాయచ దుష్కృతాం॥

ధర్మసంస్థాపనా ర్థాయసంభవామి యుగే యుగే॥

Of the various manifestations of God in this third form there are ten recognised as the leading forms. They are Matsya (fish), Kurma (Tortoise), Varaha (Boar), Narasimha (Man-lion), Vamanana (diminutive man), Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Krishna and Kalki. It is enough to say that on all these occasions the purpose was the same. I may incidentally say that some ingenuity puts this down as mere allegorical representation by the ancient Hindu of Darwin's theory of evolution of the world and adds that Darwin's missing link is also supplied by the epic called Ramayana which describes the monkeys of Rama's army. The avatars are intended further to give

object lessons for the erring mankind as to how even as man, his conduct may be so regulated as to work out easily individual salvation. Thus in the avataras they work no miracles. They are coming into the sphere of man just like any other man, go through childhood, manhood etc. just in the same way in which other men do and living with men and as men the avataras show the ideals to be aimed at and followed. That is why the contemporaries of the various avataras are not able to fully realise the *factum* of the avatara even as we experience at present. The concealment has a marvellous effect on the regulation of human conduct.

Avataras have a further value to the present generation which is perturbed by the caste system. That the caste system in this country was based on nothing but the social and political adjustment of functions and that it imports no ideas of superiority or inferiority among the castes is amply borne out by the avataras. There was an *avatara* in the Brahman community. There was one in the Kshatriya caste and there was one in the Sudra caste though some call the Yadavas as Kshatriyas too. Now there is one in the Vaisya caste so that the equality of all castes has been demonstrated. If still the caste system is in the forefront of attack it is a voluntary invitation to the unwarranted inferiority complex needlessly harboured in some quarters. The avatars have also proved the equality of the entire creation not only the human circle. In the Brahman avatar the function was one of putting down the perverse *rajasam* and militarism of the then Kshatriyas so that the community in which the avatara of Sri Rama had to take place may be purified beforehand. Unlike the first six avatars which had a singleness of purpose, the avatara of Rama was for the general reformation of the world and not merely



for the removal of the oppressor of the virtuous. In this avatar there was a thorough-going ideal placed before man. There was an ideal son, an ideal brother, an ideal husband, an ideal protector of the virtuous as against the wicked oppressor, an ideal friend and an ideal ruler of men. In the Krishna avatar it is significant how the Lord served a warrior instead of being the warrior himself. In the Vaisya avatar the spirit of bargain and compromise, the spirit of meekness, the spirit of stooping to conquer, the spirit of submission to suffering instead of resistance are all manifested not out of the proverbial cowardice but as an index of unique strength or soul force. In other words the avatars give demonstrations of self-discipline as the way to success. It is thus the enforcement of *dharma*. Besides the main avatars there were several minor avatars also spoken of in the Puranas like Bhagavatam. There were also subordinate avatars or *avesams* as they may be called in which the essence of a lesser degree of divinity descends on the adept souls for the purification of the misdirected societies. They are known as Alvars among the Srivaishnavas and they also enunciated the high principle that caste by birth is no impediment to spiritual elevation. Thus Alvars born in different castes have attained the status of objects of worship in the temples.

There is again another form known as *harda* or installation on the heart. God is enthroned in the heart and lives with the *jiva* or the individual soul which in its turn is caged in the mortal body. It may be asked whether the voluntary imprisonment of God in the mortal body along with a co-prisoner *viz* the *jiva* or the individual soul is not imposing a limitation on the limitless God. It may also be asked whether it is not attributing

imperfection to God who has been described to be free from all imperfection. It may also be asked whether so imprisoned He will not be subjected to the same pleasure and pain to which his co-prisoner is subject

There is nothing like this if we understand the ways of God aright. Wherever He may be he is free, limitless and perfect. Take the ordinary instance within your own knowledge. Three prisoners are sent to the same gaol of whom one is put under A class, another under B class and a third under C class. Are not their pains and pleasures different? When Mahatma Gandhi is in gaol does he suffer from the pains which trouble his co-prisoners. God is totally unaffected by any environment. Else his omnipresence will be an eternal botheration for him. Yet why does God exist in this form of *harda* or *antaryami*. As I said already God, *jiva* and matter or *prakriti* are inseparable elements and just as you know that body cannot live or function without soul in it so also body and soul together cease to function unless there is the Paramatma or universal soul in them and together with them. Yet by such co-existence in the *harda* form God does not lose a single attribute of His. In the Mundakopanishad a beautiful metaphor is used to illustrate this position. Two birds inseparable and possessing similar qualities cling to the same tree. Of them one eats the ripe fruit, the other does not eat but shines on all sides. The tree is the body, the bird that eats is the *jiva* or the individual soul and the one which shines but does not eat is the Paramatma or the universal soul or God. In each body God is the guiding force. This guidance is without prejudice to the *jiva* or the individual soul working out its own *karma* or liberation from *karma* and bondage. Take for instance a teacher and his pupils in the class. The teacher gives a sum in arith-

metic and guides them to work it. He then watches the boys, some of them work it correctly, some commit mistakes each varying in number. The correct solutions are rewarded. The erring boys are subjected to further course of training and each student takes his own time to deserve a promotion though the same teacher is with them all. Similarly with a teacher on swimming some of his pupils have greater struggle than the rest. Yet the guidance is not withdrawn from any one of the pupils. Even so God in the working world plays his free part. The functions of God, *jiva* and *prakriti* in the combination are described in a beautiful verse

యగ్యస్యందన సారథీక్రమ పతిత్రయ్యంత సందర్శితే  
తత్త్వేనాం త్రితయే యధార్థ వివిధ వ్యాపారసంతాతీనిని  
హేతుత్వం త్రిమకర్తృ భావఉపయోగ స్వాధీన తైకత్రతః

This means that *jiva*, *prakriti* and God represent respectively the horses, the chariot and the charioteer. The three together produce one action. Of the three, two are active agencies and the third is a passive agent. Of the two active, one is free and the other is bound by reins or *karma*.

In this connection it will be interesting to see that a similar presentation of the relationship is made by Aristotle. "The philosopher Aristotle used to liken the psychology of the individual to a team of horses engaged in drawing a chariot under the control of a charioteer. The horses are wild and unruly, and each of them is anxious to go his own way irrespective of the wishes of the other. Unless, therefore, the driver were to keep them under strict control the chariot would follow the pull of the strongest horse at the moment or rather its course would be a resultant of the different directions in which all the horses were pulling at that moment without actually following any of them. In any event the driver

would not be capable of keeping to a straight course in a given direction so that instead of arriving at its destination the chariot would pursue a haphazard zig-zag path swaying from side to side if not overturning altogether. In order to prevent this the charioteer keeps a tight hold on the reins and refuses to give any of the horses his head. This does not mean that he suppresses them altogether but that he allows to each one only so much of his way as is compatible with the satisfaction of the others and the necessity which the chariot is under of completing its course."

### Archa.

There is yet another much maligned form called the *archa* or idol form. This form of God has gone in for a great deal of criticism at the hands not only of the critics professing other religions but also at the hands of ill-informed members of the very religion which promulgates this idea. It is considered to be a sign of advancement by that section of the Hindus which decries this form in common with the followers of other religions and it is no wonder that the idolatry is considered to be a kindergarten exercise by pedagogues. When a Hindu worships an idol it is not the stone or metal that he worships but God fully manifested and imbedded in the idol. If I say that I have a high regard for our President-founder of the League Mr Panchapakesa Aiyar what is it that I am respecting. Is it his hat or necktie that I am revering? No. It is the shining soul within him which I pay my regard to. Such bodies and hats are too numerous to reckon. It is that quality of the soul in him which sought for this method of elevating his fellowmen that I admire and appreciate and respect. Even so it is not the stone or metal that is worshipped.

Now, before going into this *archa* form and its uses, merits and demerits, if any, let us review a bit, the four

forms already mentioned. There is that form in Heaven called *pūrā*. How many can realise that form from their mind's vision? Take similarly the *vyūha* form. How many have witnessed that form and can form an idea in their minds? Take then the *vibhava* form or avātars—how many have had the privilege of being contemporaries and again being even contemporaries how many have been able to realise the fact of it. Take then the *hārda* form—how many are able to realise that God who resides in each heart apart from what one may express glibly in language of mere hypocrisy as to the enthronement of God in each heart. I do not say that there can be none or too many.

All religions speak of God—personal God—and I doubt very much if any one of its followers can give an account of how he realised such God in his best of meditations or prayers. It requires a thoroughgoing withdrawal from his senses directed over objects around him in the mundane world and a fixation on God-perception. To those among the Hindus who can exercise such God-perception worship in *archa* form is nowhere made compulsory. Those who have gone to England need not see it in a map. Those who have seen Mahatma Gandhi directly do not require his photograph. It is to those who have not the high privilege of realising God in other form that God in his mercy—*kṛpā* and *vātsalyam*—has revealed this easier form in which He can meditate on Him and worship Him with at least a temporary concentration and meditation. There is this difference between the picture or statue of a human being and the picture or statue of God to use the modern terms *viz.*, that in the former there is not the spirit or soul of the man depicted whereas in the latter there is the penetration of God himself in a thoroughly concentrated form as distinguished from the form in which God rests everywhere and in and out of



between Paraswarupam and Archa form. In the fourth chapter in Bhagavadgita Bhagavan after explaining His antaryamitwam and Vibhava form assures the devotees about the Archa form

యేయధామాం ప్రపద్య స్తేజాం ప్రధైన భజన్యనాం  
మమనర్తమాను ప్తంతే మమస్యా పాదసర్వకే..

In whatever form one desires to worship Me, in that form, I make myself available for his worship. All people follow my path.

Temples represent both the Nityavibhuti & Leela-Vibhuti of God as the Parivaradevatas installed and invoked, will show. This is a subject which ought to be separately dealt with and I have done it to some extent in my book on Archa.

Now several religions believe in the oneness of God, in his powers of creation, sustentation and destruction, in His making revelations to chosen messengers, his sending on earth his chosen son or messenger and what else do all these mean if not the three forms of God that I have described as *parā*, *vyūha* and *vibhava*. If they believe that God resides in them and guides them they believe also in the *hārda* or *antaryāmi* form that I spoke of. If they believe in the efficacy of congregational worship in churches and mosques they can have no quarrel with the worship by Hindus carried on within the four walls of temples. If in churches all are assembled and seated with faces towards the pulpit what if the Hindus turn their eyes towards an object which in the *sanctum sanctorum* represents—I put in the least objectionable language—God Himself. Thus I have described to you God and God-forms according to the conception of a particular school of Vedānta among the Hindus. It is said that the Hindu conception of the revealed God is a varied one and the virtue of other reli-

gions lies in the unity of thought and unity of ideas: Every religion starts with a faith in the revelation of truth by God through some chosen messenger. I believe in the truth and sanctity of every one of the revelations put forward by the several religions on earth. But it must not be forgotten that every teaching is appropriate to the receptive capacity of the taught. A teacher may be a Master of Arts and yet he cannot teach the same thing in all classes from the infant standard up to the Arts classes. Yet what he teaches to the infant class is quite as true and correct as what he says to the pupils of the B.A., classes. If there are more revelations in one religion than in another it cannot be said that the religion which has the fewest revelations must be regarded as the most disciplined, unchanging and therefore the most reliable religion. The world of science will certainly rebel against this conservatism. I do not wish to say more on this.

### **Jivas or Individual souls.**

After dealing with the form of God, the next topic must be the place of Individual souls and their relation to God. This is also dealt with in all religions in some way or other. Let us see how the Hindu tackles this question on the authority of what God has revealed on this. According to the Hindu conception *i. e.*, the Visishtadvaitic conception the Individual souls are eternal. They never were not and they never will not be. The jiva is described in the upanishads to be an atom in size, with *jñānam* or self-perception, bliss or happiness and purity. Mundakopanishad describes as follows—“That *ātma* is *anu* and should be perceived with a pure mind the *ātma* in whom *prāṇa* remains in five forms.” Another upanishad describes it as follows. “If the hundredth part of the end of a hair be divided into hundred parts the jiva should be known as one such part. This jiva is



described as *jnana*. What does this mean? One upanishad speaks of it in the following terms—“What is the Atma? He who is a knower, self-proved and who abides within the heart in the midst of the senses is the atma.” Now the word self-proved is the English rendering of the word *svayam-prakāśam* in Sanskrit. In its essence this *jiva* is pure—*amala* or *nirmala*. When it gets into contact with body and works through senses the impurity arises by *karman*s not done in the proper manner. The *jiva* is eternal. Not created by God as some religions speak of. I said already that God *jivas* and *prakṛiti* or matter are eternal. *Jiva* then is eternal and imperishable. This aspect is very well brought out in Bhagavad Gita. As the *Paramātmā*, *Jivatma* and *Prakṛiti*, (God, *jiva* and matter) are inseparably associated it follows that there is *jiva* or soul in every object—be it a plant or beast or man or an angel. The *jiva* is the doer in all its conditions and as the doer it reaps the fruits of every action be it good or bad. So long as it is tied down to matter it is also yoked to action or *karma*. When it is yoked to *karma* it must inevitably reap the fruits of such *karma* be they good or bad or partly good and partly bad. Salvation comes in only when it frees itself from *karma* good or bad. This aspect is most beautifully explained by Mahatma Gandhi in his book on Bhagavad Gita which he calls *nishkamyāyoga* as distinguished from *karmyāyoga* or *jñānyāyoga* or *bhaktiyāyoga*. Actions done without desire, without an eye on the reward will be *karman*s that will not bind the soul or *jiva* in any manner and will lead to salvation. Until the attainment of such salvation or *mukti* the souls undergo endless births and deaths. But the birth here simply means the entry into some body and the death simply means the exit from the body as the souls are both eternal and imperishable. These births and deaths are regulated by the nature of *karman*s done. Take the case of a man

who can be said to have got a high birth in the course of his evolution. In this incarnation of the soul or *jiva* it is open to him to regulate his actions in such a manner that he may attain absolute salvation or freedom for the soul. It is open to him to attain a higher sphere by the doing of meritorious acts which may not be quite sufficient for an absolute liberation from the bondage of his soul. It is also possible that by bad acts he may go back to a lower order. So the *harma* of each soul becomes all-important determining factor of the future. If a man lives a life of truth and purity if he lives a life of service and subordination if his acts are *nishkama* or desireless, if all his meditation has been on the one God, then his binding karmas are washed away and as the chains are broken he attains his *mukti* or freedom. If his acts were not bad and if his aims were not as high as I described just now viz., the aims of a *mumukshu* (one desirous of attaining freedom) he gets his desire satisfied by living with the Devatas after his separation of the present body and when the fruits of his good karmas are enjoyed as earned he must return again to the world as such life cannot be permanent and then he must go through the journey of the soul once again as the goal is only the eternal bliss of heaven. Of course his previous karmas will endure in the succeeding journeys also. Let me cite a few passages from the upanishads describing the course after death. The end of the heart of this person shines, with this light this *atma* gets out through the eye through the top of the head or through the places in the body.... .. They that remaining in the village perform yagas carry out works of public utility, give away their possessions and do similar things go to smoke, from smoke to night, from night to the dark fortnight; from the dark fortnight to the half-year of the Sun's southward course from there to the world of the Pitrus, from the world of the

Pitrus to the ether, from ether to the moon they become *soma* king.. Then they dwell till all the *kaïma* to yield fruit is expended. Then they return by the very same path by which they went. They go to ether, from ether to *vayu*, being *vayu* they become watery vapour, being watery vapour they become cloud, being cloud they become rain-cloud, being rain-cloud they come down as rain..... They are born here as paddy or *yava* herbs or trees gingelly-seed or black grain and the like. From them escape is more difficult. Whoever eats food or emits semen they become those persons.. ... Those that return here if they have good *harma* reach good births and those that have bad *harma* reach evil births. But the path of the liberated soul is quite different. In this life itself the soul meditating on God to the exclusion of all the rest commences the enjoyment of highest bliss. A passage called *Ānandavallī* in the *Taittiriyaopaniṣad* describes the bliss of various degrees beginning from the bliss of a well-equipped man as the unit and ascending by multiples of hundred and says that the bliss of the man meditating on God of the Vedas a *srotrīya* is equal to every degree of the bliss up to the highest *Brahmānandam*.

While we speak of the individual soul by various names and attributes it is not easy to give any definite definition or even description of it so as to enable one to form a definite picture of the same. That there is soul independent of matter is an understandable and in fact a logical position too. I He or you cannot be the body, the limbs, the senses, the brain or mind or *prana*. It must be something different from these. Even St. Nammalwar expresses the difficulty as follows. "It is not possible to give a description of that wonderful entity, the soul (*atma*). The soul which is eternal and is essentially characterised by intelligence (*jnana*)—the soul which the Lord has condescended to exhibit to me as His mode or related to

him as the predicate is to the subject or attribute is to substance—the soul the nature of which is beyond the comprehension of even the enlightened, the soul which cannot be classed under any category—this or that—the soul whose apperception by the strenuous mental effort called *yoga* is even then not comparable to such perception or direct proof as arising from the senses conveying knowledge of the external world,—the soul transcending all other categories of things which could be grouped as body or the senses or as the vital spirit (*prana*) or as the mind (*manas*) or as the will (*buddhi*) because destitute of the modifications and corruptions to which all these are subject,—the soul which is very subtle and distinct from any of these neither coming under the description good or bad. The soul is briefly an entity which does not fall under the cognisance of sense-knowledge.”

These *jivas* are of three classes. They are known as *baddha*, *mukta* and *nitya*. Those who by the long series of karmas are undergoing births and rebirths until they get a liberation are known as *baddhas*. From Brahma downwards to the inanimate *stambha* these *baddha* jivas extend. Though these jivatmas possess the qualities of intelligence, bliss, purity as their intrinsic inherent nature still they have become limited and contracted by the souls being encaged in matter or *prakṛiti* which with its three qualities, of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* lead the souls into good, bad or indifferent karmas or actions.

When these souls are liberated from such karmas they become *mukta* jivas. Then the jivas attain all the qualities of *Isvara* in an uncontracted and unblinded shape.

The *nitya* souls are those which from the beginning were near God rendering services and which never had any touch or contact with the gross matter or *prakṛiti*, which had no succession of births or rebirths. They are

known as *ntyasuris*; Adishesha, Garuda, Vishvaksena etc., come under this class. When the souls attain *mukti* they get a position of equality with these *ntyas* souls. The *ntyas* have their allotted *kankaryams* or duties from the beginning.

In relation to *Isvara* or the universal soul all other souls are called *sesha* while *Isvara* is called *seshe*, *Isvara* is the residuary or coefficient and the individuals are *sesha* or remainders. It means that all exist for *Isvara* and *Isvara* exists for himself and none else. In this class as the great *naga* comes first he is called the Adishesha or the first *Sesha* or the first of the *Seshas*.

### Matter or *pradhana* or *prakriti*

We next come to the third ingredient in the cosmic compound *viz*, matter. Like God and the *jivas* matter also is eternal and so imperishable. But matter unlike God and the *jivas* is non-intelligent, everchanging but passive. Both God and the *jivas* operate on the matter. As I said already matter stands in the position of the chariot drawn by the horses the *jivas* and driven by God the charioteer. Matter like God and the *jivas* is invisible to us so long as it is in the subtle form and when it evolves into a gross form it becomes visible and in fact that is the only one in the trinity that is visible to the naked eye. It requires a yogic eye to see God and the *jivas*. Matter then being non-intelligent or devoid of *Jnana* cannot *suo moto* evolve. Therefore the evolution of matter is caused by the will of God. Says *Mantika upanishad* "She enters into the willing of *Brahmam*. Directed by Him she comes into the gross condition." The five senses, the five organs of actions, the five elements are all the products of evolved matter. *Vishnu Purana* says "When the products beginning with *mahat* and ending with the great elements remained separate

they had different capacities and without mixing and combining with one another they were unable to create the products of evolution. Mixing and combining with one another they formed the egg-shaped universe." This is but illustrative of the various methods of the evolution of matter. It is in this mode of evolution matter supplies the body of the jivas in various forms and it is this body and the jiva combined that from the body of God in various shapes and forms Creation then is but the process of evolution of matter and the combination of matter, jivas and God in the manifested worlds. There is also the dissolution of the whole thing which is known as the *pralaya*. At the dissolution all rest with Brahman in the subtlest forms.

The process of dissolution is thus described. Earth is dissolved in water, Water in fire, fire in air, air in ether, ether in the senses, the senses in the *tanmatras*; *tanmatras* in *ahamkara*, *ahamkara* in *mahat*, *mahat* in *avyakta*; *avyakta* in *tamas*, and *tamas* became one with Brahman. The reverse order is evolution. Both the processes relate to the dissolution and evolution of matter into and from its subtlest form.

Both in the state of evolution as well as dissolution the three entities co-exist viz, the universal soul, the jivas and the *prakriti* and therein is the oneness of the three known as *visishtadvaitam*.

There is a continuous process of creation, dissolution and recreation. At the beginning of every *kalpa* there is creation and at the end there is the dissolution or reabsorption. A *kalpa* is equal to 4320 millions of years and represents a day of Brahma the creator. A day of Brahma is a thousand cycles of the four yugas. Before creation the *prakriti* and the jivas are with God in an undifferentiated form known as *sat* and *tyat* or *asat* respectively as

the former never changes while the latter undergoes changes in the process of creation and evolution. *Tamas* is the name of the matter in its primordial undifferentiated subtle form. In this state it is associated with the individual self in an indistinguishable manner. In this original condition then the *prakṛti* is known by the name *avibhakta tamas*. In the first differentiated condition it is known as the *vibhakta tamas*. In the next state it is called the *akshara* in which even the qualities of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are not seen to be differentiated and in which it is also said to be promiscuously mixed up with the individual self. In its last state it is called the *avyakta* in which the differentiation of the three *gunas* has commenced to take place. From this state it proceeds to the state of *mahat* or the great principle. The constituent elements of the universe are 1. Prakṛiti, 2. Mahat, 3. Ahankara or egocity, 4. Tanmatras leading to 5. Sabda, 6. Sparsa, 7. Rasa, 8. Gandha, 9. Akasa, 10. Vayu, 11. Tejas, 12. Ap or water, 13. Prithvi or earth, 14. the mind, 15 to 20 the five senses, 20 to 24. organs, 25. Individual soul and 26 the Supreme Soul. When the universe is thus evolved an egg-shaped Brahmandam is formed 'as the seed is covered by its rind so the world is girt on every side and above and below by the egg-shell of Brahma'. This shell is encircled by water which is encompassed by fire, which again by the air, which in its turn by the sky and this by the *tanmatras*. There is final clothing of the *mahat*. The self-conscious self-illuminous soul exists in this *pradhana* or matter encompassed by the energy of the universal soul.

### **God, Individual Souls and the Prakṛiti or Matter**

We have now seen what the three entities and their qualities are. Let me summarise the topic relating to the three entities. The three entities are God, Jivatma

or the Individual Soul and matter. The first is the Supreme Ruler, the second is the enjoyer and the third is the enjoyed. All the three exist together both before the creation as well as after the creation. Creation is simply the manifestation in different forms by the will of God. "All created beings, Oh! son of Kuntī, enter into My prakṛiti at the end of each kalpa, and at the beginning of each kalpa I again send them forth. Transforming my own prakṛiti I send forth again and again, the whole of this collection of beings which is itself not free in as much as it is under the influence of prakṛiti." Presided over by me prakṛiti gives birth to all this moveable and immovable creation. Indeed for this reason it is, Oh son of Kuntī! that the work goes on undergoing transformation. ... From the connection between the intelligent and the non-intelligent things which is caused by Me there results the origin of all these beings which begins with the gods and ends with the immovable things and which are all thus mixed up with the non-intelligent thing. One upanishad puts the three in a metaphor thus. "There is one unborn female being which is red, white and black, and which produces numerous offspring of the same kind as herself, there is another male being who loves her and is close to her, there is still another male being who after having enjoyed her gives her up." Here the female being is the prakṛiti or matter. Red, white and black represent the three qualities. *Rajas* or passion is red. *sattva* or goodness is white, *tamas* is ignorance, dark or black. In the original form of the prakṛiti these are undifferentiated—one indefinable subtle form known as *tamas*. In the manifest world they are at the root of all differences. The male being in the metaphor is the Jīva who clings to her in the *samsara* stage. The other male being is the soul released from the *samsara*. Then follows another metaphor. On the



same tree the purusha or the Individual Soul sits immersed in grief and being ignorant and powerless he feels sorry. When he sees another the Lord to be fully satisfied then he also relieved from grief attains his greatness." God then is defined as existence, knowledge and Infinity. Existence here is an unconditioned existence. Knowledge is an eternal and uncontracted condition of pure intelligence. Infinity is freedom from the limitations of time, and space. So long as the individual soul is unliberated its existence is a conditioned existence, its knowledge and conditions are contracted and limited.

Having given this description of God what becomes of Personal God one may legitimately ask. I know it is a hard nut to crack with some to think of God as having a form and a location if I venture to say that there is Maha Vishnu seated in Srivaikuntham which as I said is the world of *suddha satvam*. God in the absolute, as a radiance of eternity, as a formless all pervading Tejas is to some a very clear conception, God as an avatara is intelligible. God as *antaryami* is likewise imaginable and to some realisable too, God in the archa form also, some are prepared to pass unchallenged seriously at any rate. But God in form in the *paratvam* is something abominable to some people. But I am not able to see where that difficulty really arises. To those who believe in the realities of the manifest, to those who feel the heat of the scorching Sun, to those who get drenched by the rain, to those who feel the coolness of the moon there need be no difficulty in the realisation of a God located and with form and attributes too so long as there can be the Sun in one place and with a form and yet diffusing the rays all over, and so on. Even the light at home exemplifies the truth of a material in one place diffusing the light all over the room. Even so can there not be God with form in some

place. That does not mean that God is limited by space. What then is the form? It is said that man is made in the image of God. Be that the form. In Sri Bhagavata, Krishna at birth is described to have appeared before Vasudeva in a certain form as his form in his *paratvam*. Take that as the authority. In Vishnu Purana a form is given for meditation. "The meditating sage must think of Vishnu as having a delightful and lovely countenance with eyes like the leaf of the lotus, smooth cheeks and a broad and brilliant forehead ears of equal size, the lobes of which are embellished with splendid pendants, a painted neck and a broad breast on which shines the mystic mark of Srivatsa, a belly falling in graceful fold, with a deep-seated navel, eight long arms or else four, and firm and well knit thighs, and legs with well formed feet and toes, clad in a yellow raiment wearing a rich diadem and brilliant armlets and bracelets, and bearing in his hands the bow, the shell, the mace, the sword, the discus, the rosary, the lotus and the arrow." The same Vishnu Purana gives also the symbolic significance of these to those who will conceive God as without shape. "The great Hari holds the pure soul of the world like the Kaustubham, the prakriti as Srivatsam, intellect in the form of mace, two fold forms of egotism as conchshell and bow, mind in the shape of discus, Vaijayanti with five precious stones representing the five elemental rudiments, action and perception in the shape of sword and shield.

புருடன் மணிவரமாகப் பொன்னுமூலப்

பிரகிருதி மறுவாக மான் தண்டாக

தெருள் மருள் வாள் மறைவாக வாங்காரங்களை

சார்ங்கஞ் சங்காக மனந் திகிரியாக

இருடிகள்களீரைநதுஞ் சரங்களாக

விருபூதமாலை வனமாலையாகக்

கருடனுருவாம மறையின் பொருளாந கண்ணன்

கரிகிரிமேல் நின்றனைத துங் காககின்றனே,

The omnipotent God can have shape as easily as have no shape. He appeals to all within their competence and there need be no quarrel over this. I passed the stage when I used to put irreverent questions over this from of theory. I used to ask has God then intestines, lungs, auricles and ventricles, arteries and veins and is God subject to asthma as I suffer and what medicines does he use and such endless nonsense. I mention this only to forget those sinful days. His form we have been gifted with but to our complicated functions of existence complications have been added. To me man represents the image of God and the idols in the temples likewise emphasise to us the image of God in this paratvam. But it should not be understood that God's form is constituted by that gross form of prakṛi with which our bodies are constituted. The form of God is of the suddha satvic form known as divya-mangalavigraham.

Now according to the Visishtadvaitic conception this form is to be seen in the loka called Sri Vaikuntham. It is a place called suddhasatva-loka as distinguished from the prakṛiti-maṇḍalam or place where all the three guṇas viz, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are mixed up and work in combination. Hence the latter is known as *misra sattvam*. This suddhaloka is unaffected even by mahapralaya or general deluge and is ever permanent and indestructible and imperishable. The bliss enjoyable in this the highest loka is far superior to that which can be enjoyed even in Brahmaloḥa or Indraloka or Svargam not so speak of the still inferior lokas or worlds. In this lokam the Nityasuris the mukta or the liberated souls enjoy the everlasting unlimited, unconditioned unmixed bliss for ever and those jīvas which have reached this loka never return to Earth for the miserable births and deaths,

మాముపేత్య పునర్జన్మ దుఃఖాలయమ శాశ్వతమ్ ।

నాపుష్పంతా మహాత్మానం సంసిద్ధిం పరమాంతతాః ॥

The mahatmas that have achieved the highest accomplishment, having once reached Me do not again attain birth, the abode of misery, the impermanent state.

అబ్రహం భువన్మానోకాః పునరావర్తి నోర్జనా ।

మాముపేత్యతు కాంతేయ పునర్జన్మనవిద్యతే ॥

The worlds from the world of Brahma downwards are for returning, O Arjuna! But there is no birth, O Kuntī's son! for him who has come to Me

Those who realise this truth will desire to attain only this kind of eternal bliss and not seek anything lower than this.

It should however not be understood that God has only the personal form just described. This form may be called the individual or personal form as distinguished from the universal form of God which is omnipervasive, omni-petrative, all-embracing As Mahatma Gandhi puts it. "There is an undefinable, mysterious power that pervades everything I feel it though I do not see it It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses. But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent.. ....I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is-changing, ever-dying there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God, and since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist He alone is." It is this universal form that the yogi is asked to realise by meditation. Therefore the Vishnu Purana after first giving the form of the personal God as He presents him-

self in the Suddhasatva-Vaikuntha-loka for the yogi's meditation proceeds further as follows 'The yogi may believe his retention to be perfect when this image never vanishes from his mind whether he be going or standing or be engaged in any other voluntary act. The sage may then meditate upon the form of Vishnu without his arms as the shell, mace, discus, and bow and as placid and bearing his rosary only. When the idea of this image is firmly retained then he may meditate on Vishnu without his diadem, bracelets, or other ornaments. He may next contemplate on him as having but one single limb and may then fix his whole thoughts upon the body to which the limbs belong. The process of forming a lively image in the mind exclusive of all other objects constitutes dhyana or meditation which is perfected by six stages and when an accurate knowledge of self free from all distinction is attained by this mental meditation that is termed samadhi. After accomplishing this stage the yogi acquires discriminative knowledge which is the means of enabling living soul (the individual soul) to attain the attainable Supreme Being.

Thus the universal form of God known as Visvarupam is realisable only by the highest yogi and Bhagavan Sri Krishna says that even the yogi cannot see the Visvarupam unless there is added to it the highest devotion. When one realises the universal form of God he sees God in every visible object. He sees God in every action. He sees God at all times and in all places. He does not think evil to any being. He is full of compassion. He is free from all attachment. He looks upon pleasure and pain with equanimity. He neither loves nor hates. He renounces everything both the auspicious and the inauspicious. He is full of devotion to God and to God alone. Says Lord Sri Krishna "Now those Bhaktas who with

faith earnestly adopt this course leading to dharma and immortality I being their supreme object, those devotees are most beloved of me "

One who is thus loved by God is the real jnani or pandita. He sees in every object the gracious God and nothing else Of him Srīmad Bhagavata says—

విస్మయజ్యాయమానాన్ తృళం ప్రీతాంచ దైహికం ।

ప్రణామేదండవత్ భూమా ఆశ్వచండాల గోఖరమ్ ॥

Leave alone those who may ridicule. Leave alone any sense of aversion. Prostrate on the floor before all from dog to Chandala and cow to an ass :—

బ్రాహ్మణే కుల్కనే స్తేనేబ్రహ్మణ్యోర్మై స్ఫులింగశే ।

అక్రూరే క్రూరశే దైవసమదృక్ పండితో మతః ॥

In Brahmin, low caste, thief and Brahmajñani, Sun and spark, good man and vicious man-Pandita sees Brahman alike. Says again Bhagavat Gita.—

విద్యావినయసంపన్నే బ్రాహ్మణే గవిహస్తీని ।

కునిచైవ శ్వపాకేచ పండితా స్సమదర్శినః ॥

In the Brahmin who possesses complete knowledge and great humility, in the cow, in the elephant, in the dog and in the man that eats the dog, the learned are the seers of the equal.

It is however not easy to get this realisation of the universality of God. By the imprisonment of the soul in the material body with its concomitant influences of the three kinds of gunas—*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and the predomination of the lower desires of the senses, the maya of karma everflowing dips the soul in ignorance and it is by the special exertions of the soul in overcoming the destructive factors and in breaking the chains the soul can attain to the highest knowledge just described and realise the all-pervasive God Bhagavan Sri Krishna himself expresses this difficulty.

బహునాం జన్మనామంతే జ్ఞానవాన్మాంప్రపద్యతే ।

వాసుదేవస్సర్వ మితి సమహాత్మా సురుద్ధభః ॥

At the end of innumerable births one gets at the wisdom that everything is Vasudeva and attains Me Such a mahatma is very rare.

It is after several births and rebirths one gets the knowledge that he is the individual soul who is entirely controlled by the Universal soul, that he is for God and for God alone, that the attainment of moksham is his goal.

Now we have seen the two forms of God-the personal and the impersonal But the two are not distinct in the sense that they represent two separate entities The same one God presents himself in a personal form in Sri Vairakuntham and pervades the entire world by his universality. The jnani, the mumukshu, must realise God in every object, in every act, and with that knowledge he must regulate his own acts and feel that he serves God by serving humanity and the entire creation and then alone will he attain the highest...*sajyujyam* with the universal soul.

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## PART II

### Path to Salvation.

I have so far dwelt on the three entities, *viz*, the Universal soul, the Individual souls and matter which form the essentials of the manifested world Take for instance a man In him there is the combination as one entity all these three essentials Now you find that the jiva or the soul is covered by the matter as its body and the universal soul holds both together. When soul is bound by the body and the concomitant actions it is said to be baddha or bound The liberation of the soul is

called *mukti* or *moksha* or salvation. As long as the soul is bound it must be doing *karma* or action. As long as there is the heaping up of *kaumas* there cannot be freedom for the soul. How then can it get freedom? It is explained at length by Mahatma Gandhi in his most edifying commentary on *Bhagavat Gita* which according to Mahatmajī teaches *NISHKAMA YOGA*. *Bhagavat Gita* according to some teaches *KARMA YOGA*, according to some other it teaches *JÑANAYOGA* and according to still some others it teaches *BHAKTI YOGA* as the method of salvation. The path to salvation is known as *Brahma-vidya*. According to the school of thought which I have been dealing with the path to salvation lies in *Bhakti cum Prapatti*. *Bhakti mārga* is the path of devotion. Though one speaks of *bhakti* as the path, it carries with it the *jñana* or knowledge of *Brahman* and the necessary duties or *karman* or actions as the pre-requisites of true *bhakti*, *viz.*, that kind of *bhakti* which will earn salvation for the soul from its bondage. I have described to you what *Brahman* is. One should have clear perception of the form and attributes of *Brahman* or God. Having secured such knowledge he must meditate on God. Mere random prayers will not do. A concentrated meditation is necessary. As *Bhagavat Gita* says, "Let the yogi with the help of the mind restrain all the senses from every object. Let him slowly withdraw from all outside objects with knowledge and perseverance. Let him fix the mind on the *atma* and not think of anything else."

Another elaborate description of the method of meditation may be profitably mentioned in this connection. "One that knows how *yoga* should be done should control the senses that are attached to sound and other qualities of sense objects and make them work in unison with the mind. He will then be doing *pratyaharas*. From this comes a very high degree of control over the fickle sen-



ses. When the breath is brought under control by *pranayama* and the senses by *pratyahara* he should make the mind remain on an object that is pure and capable of being grasped. When the thought of the figure held steadily by the mind with the help of *dharana* is repeated continuously without the intervention of a dissimilar thought it is *dhyana*. When this stream of thought grasps only the *svarupa* and leaves out particulars like size and colour it is known as *samadhi*. It is to be brought about by *dhyana*. It is this kind of meditation alone that can achieve the high object that is aimed at, viz., the liberation of the soul from its bondage. There are several details involved in this method of attaining salvation. Then there are the karmas which are incessantly done by the soul bound in body. Liberation from karma cannot be achieved by inanition but by the doing of the actions without any thought of result or the fruits thereof. Action is thy duty and result is not thy concern is maxim of actionrule of conduct. Thus it is no easy job to get salvation. It cannot be attained by doing all harm to others, all evil deeds and then offer prayers at the end of the week with preparedness for carrying the same programme in the succeeding week. Nor will it do much good to go through the sandhya-vandanams three times a day even, with mind set upon how to put up your witnesses in court, how to extort money from others, how to sell your articles at unconscionable prices etc.

Even the meditation alone will not get Mukti. Meditation is a great step. There must be love of God combined with the Meditation. It is that which is reciprocated and the reciprocation from God is the final step in the attainment of mukti. Says Bhagavan Sri Krishna (xi-53). "It is not possible to see me with the help of the Vedas, through the practice of religious austerity,

through the giving of gifts or through sacrifices in the same manner in which you have seen Me now. O Arjuna! destroyer of foes" it is possible to really know, see and enter into Me such as I am now exclusively by means of Bhakti " *Vedana* or knowledge is based on firm memory or meditation and so is synonymous with *upasana* or worship which again means *bhakti*. The pre-requisites of this *upasana* or worship are—(1) *Viveka*—Discrimination It means the purification of the body by means of the food which is not impure either because of its own nature or because of its source or because of any other special cause. When the food is pure the mind becomes pure and when the mind is pure the memory is firm. (2) *Vimoka*—Freedom. Freedom is the absence of clinging to desire. (3) *Abhyasa*—Practice. It means the worshipping of God as the home of goodness again and again. (4) *Kriya*—work The performance of sacrifices according to one's capacity. (5) *Kalyana*—auspiciousness. This consists in truth, uprightness, mercy, liberality, harmlessness, and in not coveting another's property. (6) *Anavasaṇa*—absence of weakness and (7) *Anuddharsha*—Absence of excessive merriment. Excessive joy is as harmful as a state of melancholy.

If, with tranquillity and equanimity of mind *bhakti* to God develops, the soul immersed in love for God gets into a rapturous mood when, it turns, into regular madness. There are some who think that by a few prostrations before an image of God they must be taken as true *bhaktas*. Some there are also who are ashamed to prostrate before an image of God in the presence of another. Neither the ostentation nor the shyness counts for anything in the world of spirituality. It is true *bhakti* or devotion that makes the real step to *mukti*. *Mukti* or Salvation, liberation of the matter-bound-soul and the

attainment of eternal bliss, the bliss enjoyed in the eternal home from the real goal. Every soul is, we may say, homeward bound from its temporal and temporary sojourns.

“God possessed, our own God, that is Creation’s Home, that our last end, there only is our rest. O that the winds of grace would blow that we may sail more swiftly over this broad sea to our eternal home. Another day is gone, another week is passed, another year is told. Blessed be God then we are nearer to the end. It comes swiftly, yet it comes slowly too. Come it must and then it will all be a dream to look back upon”—DR FABER’S CREATOR & CREATURE

Night and Day,

Musing on me—him will and swiftly lift  
Forth from life’s ocean of distress and death  
Whose soul clings fast to me. Cling then to me  
Clasp me with heart and mind, so shalt thou dwell  
Surely with me on high.

—*Bhagavat Gita.*

### **Prapattimarga**

We have been discussing the path of bhakti leading to salvation. Sages have spoken of yet another path, *viz.* *prapatti*. The path of bhakti itself leads to its logical conclusion of *prapatti*. Yet distinct from the path of bhakti ending in *prapatti* there is another which begins and ends with *prapatti* itself. It is otherwise known as *saranagati*.

It means falling at the feet of God as the only means for his salvation. It is a process of surrender with confessions. It may appear to be a made-easy business at the outset. But it is really not so. Meditator begins with an initial stage and by gradual steps reaches

a stage which prapatti requires as the starting stage. In prapatti the stage must be reached when he can be called a mu-mukshu—one desirous of attaining mukti or salvation. Mumukshu-salvation aspirant is one who has clearly understood the relationship between the individual jiva or soul and God the universal soul, who has realised that the original qualities of the soul have become limited in every way by the association with the achit or matter, who desires to get back the original qualities by the destruction of all impediments to such restoration, who feels his incompetency to attain such salvation unless he changes his life and habits shaped by material desires which are perishable, who therefore resolves to find out the methods of the said destruction and restoration. Individual soul by its initial essence is one of the same kind as the universal soul—self-luminous, intelligent, blissful, pure. Yet by its getting entangled and chained by matter it has lost its high virtues. There are seven impediments or doshas. They are alpatva (littleness), asthiratva (perishability), duhkhamulatva (origination in sorrow), duhkhamisratva (mixture of sorrow), dukhodarkatva (promoter of sorrow), viparitha-abhimanamulatva (causation of perverse selfishness or egoism), Svabhavika-anandavirudhatwa (enemy of its congenital bliss). These are the impediments to the true realisation of himself and his goal.

So long as these have their hold on a man his actions and desires will be such as to promote the seven impediments. The mumukshu has to get rid of these impediments and prepare himself to attain the eternal bliss. He who therefore gives up acts and karmas leading to secular happiness, who gives up the egotism or *ahamkara* and *mamakara* and takes up to doing acts pleasing to God with the attainment of the eternal bliss as his only goal is a mumukshu truly so called. This is

the stage that one must reach. These fall under two classes *viz.*, those who by their own exertions and qualifications make a direct appeal to God and those who by their personal incompetency make an appeal through a guru. They are known as *svanishtha* and *acharyanishtha*. Who then are qualified for the two kinds of appeals—direct and indirect as stated just now? Those who are fit to adopt the first course must adopt that and those who are unfit to make a direct appeal ought to appeal indirectly through one acharya or guru. One who knows the king personally and has accessibility to him ought to express his grievances directly. He cannot take a recommendation through another. One who has no such knowledge or intimacy must get himself recommended through another who has such facilities. So with the king of kings those who are competent to make their own appeal ought to make a direct prayer. Those who are incompetent ought to approach through a competent guru. One who has gained knowledge of sastras performs his karmas according to the injunctions laid down and then attains divine wisdom and that will lead him on to true bhakti or devotion from which he makes his direct prapatti or appeal. One who has no knowledge, one who is unable to go through the yogas or meditation or upasana and yet desires to attain mukti or salvation must go through the intercession of a competent guru. Who is a competent guru and what is the true path of discipleship will be another subject by itself. The essentials of prapatti are five. They are known as five angas or limbs of prapatti.

ఆనుకూల్యస్యసంకల్పః ప్రాతికూల్యస్యవజ్రసం

రక్షిష్యతీతివిశ్వాసః గోప్యత్వపరణంతథా

ఆత్మనిత్యేచకార్యణ్యే షడ్విధాశ్శరణాగతిః

Resolution to do that which is pleasing to God, resolution to abandon non-pleasing acts, absolute confi-

dence in God as the only savior, expression of his needed favour and placing the soul at the feet of God for such acceptance by God. Resolve to do acts acceptable by God. Resolve never to be disloyal to God. Have the firm faith that God alone can save you. Express your absolute helplessness. Pray that the burden may be accepted by Him and you be relieved of the same. In prapatti the stage must be reached when these processes are not gone through by mere words or phrases or superficial formalities as oaths are so often taken by graduates at the convocation or by the legislators or by the witnesses in courts. The man must feel that he is helpless; he must feel a feverish desire to get his freedom, he must feel his incapacity to adopt any method other than the one he is obliged to seek. He must feel that his liberation is in the hands of God and God alone. He must feel that he is disburdening himself by placing his soul at the feet of the Lord of the universe. This mentality of absolute sincerity is not easily reachable and God cannot be deceived by words as men may be. I said that there are incompetent persons who get through the help of acharya or guru. Among this class may be placed also children, men, who may be in their comatose condition and even animals and such like. Prapatti gives salvation for one and all. In the case of such physically and mentally incompetent one if any saintly person happens to take pity and appeals to God he gets such benefits as the competent man gets by his prapatti. I know a case like this. My aunt's husband who had a saintly character and was leading a saintly life happened to see in his backyard a pig struggling for life and being about to die he ran in to the puja room and prayed to God that the pig may attain salvation. You may ask me whether I can vouchsafe that the pig attained salvation. My answer is 'as assuredly as one can say of the

competent man's soul having attained mukti" as both are based on the same sastraic texts. In the attainment of salvation by means of prapatti there is no question of caste no question of genus or species as all alike will get it provided the one or the other of the kinds of prapatti is available. Take an instance from common life. A most incompetent man may be recommended for a post by the most influential friend or relation of his. He will get the post despite his personal incompetency, only no respectable man will make a recommendation against his conscience. Similarly no true acharya or guru will recommend to God's acceptance one whose life has been wicked immoral, irreligious and so on. Thus one form of prapatti stands on the personal qualifications of the individual himself and the other is built on the solid foundation of the saintliness of the guru or acharya. Prapatti again is a doctrine of repentance and expiation by repentance. It is not ordinarily humanly possible for one to be good and pure uniformly all through his life. A part of the life is spent in a wayward manner and the awakening may come at a later stage. The law of karma enacts that every man must reap the fruits of his karma good and bad alike. What then becomes of evil karmas of one who had such a late-age awakening and the safety-ship of prapatti to cross the *samsara*? God in his mercy excuses all the earlier evil karmas and gives him the lifting hand. A genuine repentance may come in and a genuine prapatti made even a minute before one's death and he will also be saved—for that is the extent to which God's mercy proceeds towards a genuine repenter and surrenderer and aspirant for the eternal bliss. This does not mean that one knowing the goal chalks out a deliberate programme for being wicked all through his life with an agenda of repentance fixed up for the last moment in his

life. It will have the inherent defect of genuineness about it. He cannot escape the warrant from the Lord of the Hell.

### Test of true Prapatti.

What is the test whether one's prapatti or self-surrender was genuine and true or not? That can be seen from his subsequent life acts. (ఉత్తరకృత్యం.)

(1) If he is abused or maltreated by another he will feel that they relate only to his physical body and do not concern his soul and will not get angry or excited over it.

(2) He will further pity the man who maltreats him, as by maltreating the maltreater takes upon himself the sins of the person so maltreated. శప్యమానస్యతత్పాపం శప్యంతమధిగచ్ఛతి.

(3) He will be grateful to the man who maltreats him, and for reminding him of his defects and sins if any.

(4) He will feel that it is God that plays the game of making one man do that kind of karma, viz., abusing and maltreating him and so he ought not to be annoyed at the individual.

(5) He will always be conscious of his helplessness.

(6) He will never fear even death, on the other hand he will be ever ready to receive death as a welcome dear guest, కృతకృత్యాపరీక్షంతే మృత్యుంప్రియమివాతిధిమ్.

(7) He will feel no personal anxiety about his own life's needs and feel confident that he is in the shelter of God.

(8) He will enjoy what God in his grace sends to him.

(9) He will also be thinking of the eternal bliss to be accorded to him and be ever praying to and worshipping God

(10) He will not do any harm to others nor will he seek help from others.



(11) If involuntarily he harms he will have no fear on that account. If similarly he gets any good he will feel no exultation over it.

A true prapanna's life will therefore be one of ideal austerity.

In passing I may invite your attention to the identity between these principles and the principles taught to us day after day by Mahatma Gandhi demonstrating the precepts by example

*Cf.* the Biblical teachings:

(1) A servant of God must not be contentious but mild and sweet towards all men and be patient and apt to learn (2. TIM. ii, 24)

(2) Let us not render any one evil for evil (ROM xii 17).

(3) Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. (MATT. vi, 12).

(4) Let all sorts of harshness choler and indignation be banished from amongst you and be ye sweet and merciful one to another pardoning one another as God has pardoned you. (EPH. iv, 31).

(5) Forgive and you shall be forgiven (LUKE vii, 37)

### **Free will, Fatalism and Determinism.**

It may be asked why under the rule of the almighty, omniscient and all merciful God there should be so many differences among men, among societies etc. Why is one man rich and another poor? Why is one the master and another the servant? Why does one nation rule and another be the subject race? These are questions answered by the Hindu doctrine of karma. According to the Hindu doctrine there is free will for the individual soul and the doctrine of fatalism is not approved. Every individual soul has the free will to regulate its own actions or

karma The acts of an individual regulate his individual condition The collective acts of individuals in a society regulate the condition of the society or the community. The combined acts of the king and the subjects regulate the condition of the nation or the people at large. By individual bad karma the individual falls By the collective acts of a community contrary to its dharma the community falls and suffers. By the failure of dharma on the part of the king aggravated by similar failures of the king's subjects the kingdom itself falls. Kautilya enumerates six enemies which must be avoided by man or society or the king. They are lust, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and overjoy. These have to be conquered first whether it is by an individual or by a society or by a king.

Now it is clear how differences of conditions arise between an individual and another, between a community and another and between a nation and another.

This kind of giving freedom and watching the progress is termed a *līlā-vibhūti* of God or Īsvara as distinguished from the *niṭyavibhūti* which is obtained in heaven among the souls that have attained salvation.

What then is the real cause of all the trouble to jiva and what is the rescue for it? All trouble arises through the instrumentality of the three gunas called *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* working together each trying to overpower the other two. If *satvikaguna* gets the upper hand then the jiva's path is safe and sure. If the *rajasa* gets the upper hand the result is bad though not as bad as the triumph of *tamasa*, over the other two Says Bhagavan "*satva* puts one into bliss; *rajasa* into action and *tamasa* into heedless-ness " From *satva*, knowledge is produced, from *rajasa*, desire is caused, From *tamasa*, arises heedless-ness, delusion and ignorance. Upwards go those who are

in *satva*, those in *rajasa* remain in the middle; those in *tamasa* go down. Upper lokas are the *jana*, &c., The middle is the *svarga*; the lower loka is the hell. The upper-most is the Vaikunthaloka—the Heaven. To reach that is the eternal *mukti*. Says Bhagavan Sri Krishna: The dweller of the body, that is the *jivatma*, having overcome all the three qualities that have displayed themselves in this body becomes free from birth and death, old age and misery and attains to Amrita—the immortal Para-Brahman. Arjuna asks about the tests of one who has conquered all the three gunas and Bhagavan describes him like this—he to whom pleasure and pain are the same, who is unchanged, to whom a lump of earth, a piece of stone, and gold are alike; the un-loved is equal to the loved, to whom praise of self is equivalent to censure, and who is a *dhira*—full of courage; he who is the same when honoured or dishonoured; the same whether friends or foes are acting, who has given up all undertakings is called a *guna-tita*—i.e., one above the influence of all gunas. Arjuna's question to Sri Krishna had to be described in words and now you have the advantage also of seeing one who can answer these tests. What Sri Krishna then described to the wise and knowing Arjuna the same Krishna is now showing by example to the less knowing jivas of this age that nishkama karmas or desireless actions, bhakti and prapatti lead on to the mukti.

In the first part of our discourse on the subject we have noticed descriptions of the path of the soul proceeding to svarga or some higher loka to enjoy the fruits of some good deeds done and then return for rebirth in the world.

The path of soul absolutely liberated and temporarily liberated are depicted in Bhagavad Gita as follows;—

అగ్నిర్జ్యోతి రహస్యుః పశ్యానా ఉత్తరాయణమ్ ।  
తత్రప్రయాతా గచ్ఛన్తి బ్రహ్మ బ్రహ్మవిదోజనాః ॥  
ధూమారాత్రి సైధాకృష్ణః పశ్యానాదక్షిణాయనమ్ ।  
తత్ర చాద్రిమసం జోతి ర్యోగీపాశ్యనివర్తుతే ॥

Literal meaning is —(Agni, jyoti, daytime, the bright fortnight, the six months *uttarayana*—going on this path the men who know Brahman attain to Brahman Smoke, night time, dark fort-night, six months—*dakshinayana*, on this going forth the yogi having reached the jyoti of the moon returneth )

The orthodox meaning of the two slokas as given by the Bhashyakarars is that agni means here the deity Agni, jyotis is the deity called the Archis, daytime means the deity presiding over the daytime together with the deity called Abhijit, the bright fortnight means the deity presiding over that fortnight including the fullmoon day. The six months similarly its presiding deity—*uttarayana* and *vishu* Corresponding deities are given for the dark path in the second of the above stanzas.

According to this interpretation the stanzas mean thus.—Those wise men who go by the path presided over by the first set of deities go to the highest world and those who go by the path presided over by the deities of the dark path go only half way to a higher loka and return to earth after the enjoyment period of their reward is over. It will be very illuminating to know the interpretation of Mahatma Gandhi on these two stanzas

What can be gathered from Mahatmajī's interpretation is that the paths described in the two slokas are not literally the route maps for the liberated souls of either description but they indicate as symbols only the preparatory stages In other words what are the requirements of the one who wants the highest bliss and what of the other type.

Agni then seems to be taken as a symbol for sacrifice and according to Mahatmajī as shown in other portions of

his commentary the best sacrifice or *yajna* is labour for the use of others. *Jyoti* is taken to mean knowledge of Brahman, daytime and *suklapaksham* are symbols of pristine purity, *uttarayana* is a symbol of auspiciousness. Similarly smoke and night are symbols of ignorance, *dashminayana* a symbol of inauspiciousness.

Viewed in this manner his meaning is he who makes sacrifice, that is, he who spends all his lifetime for the benefit of others, he who has attained the highest knowledge he who has become a *jnani*, and he who retains these qualifications even at the time of his death—such a one gets *moksha*. He who has made no sacrifices, who has attained no knowledge, he who does not know *bhakti*, he will go to Chandraloka—a temporary loka and will return to earth. Chandra or moon has no inherent light.

### Fruits of such liberation.

The result of the foregoing methods of attaining freedom is as we call it the attainment of *moksha*, *mukti* or the reaching the goal of all souls. Thereafter in heaven or Vaikuntham the liberated soul enjoys eternal bliss on par with the *nityasuris* that I spoke of on the last occasion. When the time for the soul quitting the gross body arrives his senses unite with the mind, the mind and the senses unite with the *prana*. Prana with the senses and the mind unites with the *jiva* or soul, and the *jiva* thus equipped unites with the five elements in their subtle condition. The *jiva* in this subtle body goes up to *ruaja* and after crossing *viraja* the *jiva* takes a suddha-satvic body like that of God himself and reaches the highest *Atman*. Thus are *salokyam*, *sarupyam*, *samipyam* and *sayujyam* attained by the freed soul. It gets all the qualities, all the enjoyment, all the likeness etc., of God. Except the powers of God for creation, sustentation and destruction which are God's own not

shared with the *muktas* or *niityasuras* too the freed soul gets all other bliss. But whose is the greater happiness on this meeting or reunion. Is it that of God or of the jiva? Let me here refer to an illustration used by our guru Sri Vedanta Desikar. "A king went out to a forest for hunting and took with him his wife and children too. When they were all busy with their various pastimes in various directions their baby crawled out in its own way. When they all returned to the place they discovered that the baby was missing. Meanwhile the baby was found in the forest by a Vedan (hunter) and carried away by him to his hut. The baby was brought up by the Vedan and his wife in their own fashion with their own food and raiment and as the baby grew older he was taught in the ways and profession of the foster parents. In this manner the child went on for several years. The child did not know its real parentage and took the Vedan and his wife as his real parents. A lie totally inconsistent with its birth was thus led by the king's son in the environment of the Vedacheri. At last a good wise man saw from the features of the boy that he could not really belong to Veda parentage. He had known the story of the loss of child in the forest by the king. So he proposed to take him back to the real parents. The boy then was not in a condition fit to be taken to the king's presence. So he first gave him princely cloths, princely ornaments, taught him stately learning, informed him of his real parentage, created in him a desire to go back to his parents and assume and enjoy all the regality of his position. After thus preparing him he took the boy to the King and Queen and told them. "here is your lost son come back to be in the same palace in which he was and in which you are, to enjoy the happiness which you enjoy and which he has a right to share with you and so

on". Now whose is the greater happiness, is it the parents' or the son's? I leave you, gentlemen, to decide.

I hope with this brief and perhaps poor presentation made by one who cannot pretend to have studied his own religious literature to any decent extent you will be able to see that the Hindu religion is not a religion of the barbarians. I said at the beginning that the Hindu religion lays down not only the principles of God-head but extends even to the sphere of personal conduct and social conduct. The rules of conduct form the logical sequences of the principle guiding the evolution and salvation of individual souls. As karmas or actions play a leading part in the evolution of souls rules of personal and social conduct take the shape of religious injunctions at every stage. As the facility for such evolution has to be provided for by the state the rules in the name of religion are also laid down for the conduct of the King and the State. Hence it is a religion of politics also. For instance the king is described as possessing the *amsa* or portion of God in him. With this status given to the King he is called upon to observe the rules of government laid down in a religious spirit. That is how the Hindu religion is an all-comprehensive scheme and people with tendencies for reformation in social matters are making attempts to separate religion proper as they call it from social rules.

### Comparative Study.

I have been placing before you the leading principles of that school which bestows the greatest attention on bhakti or devotion. I have also placed before you that importance is attached to absolute renunciation of desires and unattachability to the results of your actions. I have pointed out also that the man desiring salvation will give up ideas of *I*-ness and *my*-ness. 'நிர் துமடுதன்றிலை

வேற்றுதலமாயிததி' This is also the teaching of Jesus Christ. Mark the words recorded in Luke's Gospel. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters yea and his own life also he cannot be my disciple. This, therefore I say, brethren the time is short, it remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none."

And they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as if they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not. And they that used this world as they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away," (1 Corioanus vii)

John's Gospel says, "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal."

Matthew's Gospel says, 'If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Theologia Germanica says, "The more the Self, the I, the Me, the Mine, abate in a man the more doth God's 'I' (*i.e.*, God Himself) increases in him."

These are doctrines which are identically the same as the doctrine of renunciation *sātvikatyāga* propounded by the Hindu school. In these passages just quoted, there are really rules of karma as steps to salvation. Yet the material world will keep them off and not treat them as religious injunctions laid down for conduct. We speak of *satchidananda* as God's attributes. Our Christian friends speak of Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. St. Francis de Sales in his treatise on Love of God observes thus. "In the holy and undivided Trinity, the son is engendered by the Father (*sat*) and is the term of his knowledge (*chit*); the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son and is the term of their mutual love (*ānanda*)



The Rev. E. J. Fripp of Dr. Martineau's system of Philosophy says thus.—'Rightly interpreted a philosophy that teaches the Divine in all souls, that reveals the authority for good in every heart and conscience and proclaims on a new and deep sense the Fatherhood of God to all men and women is the recognition of universal rights and sacred obligation compared with which the rights and obligations of possession, blood, rank, race and education are altogether secondary. The religious future is with those who feel, utter this and make great sacrifices for it.' Can there be any doubt that Hinduism presents this view in all its intensity and have not the ancient sages sacrificed for this ideal.

There are critics who do not read but will freely insult the Hindu. Take for instance the criticism that God Krishna is said to have stolen the sarees of the women while they were bathing and made them all come naked before him. Can he be God? Who can answer this better than Dr. Annie Besant. She says in her book on *Avataras* thus "Let me take one instance—the stealing of Gopis garments by Krishna—which ignorant lips have used most in order to insult, to try to defame the majesty that they do not understand? But let me say this that I believe that in most cases where these bitter insults are uttered they are uttered by people who have never really read the story and who have only heard bits of it and have supplied the rest out of their own imaginations. But the lesson is this—that when the soul is approaching the supreme Lord at one great stage of initiation it has to pass through a great ordeal, stripped of everything on which it has hitherto relied, stript of everything that is not of its inner self, deprived of all external aid, of all external protection, of all external covering, the soul itself in its own inherent life must stand naked and alone with nothing to rely on save the life of the self within it."

Mr E S Sturdy in his Narada Bhakti Sutra says thus — The playing of Krishna with the shepherdesses—perhaps no Hindu allegory has been so aspersed—has been made by some few debased people of India as similar allegories have in other countries an excuse for license under the cloak of religion. It has been used by the ignorant, by the missionaries and others as a weapon of hostile criticism against the Hindu religion. We may safely assert that none of these have read the original but merely sought some means to destroy people's religion in order to advocate their own. Time might be better employed in pointing out the original intention of the allegory by which they would elevate both themselves and the people with whom they come in contact. .... Love is one whether it be called that of Christ, Krishna or any other individualised expression of truth."

The same Krishna is also an accused on a charge of theft. He steals butter. So can he be God? Pertinent question. Dr. Faber in his book on CREATOR and CREATURE says thus in defence. "The esoteric meaning of this butter stealing event on which the Christian missionaries delight to put such vicious construction is that God incarnates among men and is so solicitous of saving them that he takes even their butter unawares. Butter is put into pot and hung up on hanging hoofs of rope. This network symbolises the body, butter in it is the soul, the act of stealing is the solicitude on the part of God to save the soul or reclaim it, his own property. That God desires to be offered the food of his aspirants and that he is ever active in the function of salvation are the two truths exemplified by the stealing act of the Holy incarnation. God desiring and man withholding and then God getting as it were by stealth or by caress less than a tithe of his due from less than a tithe of his creation

and then as it were spreading himself out in a kind of joyous triumph at his success.' I have inflicted on you these long citations just to convince you that even western scholars have ceased criticisms by a better understanding of the high and sublime principles enunciated in popular stories by the ancient sages.

The *avatara* of Krishna is the supremest of the *avataras* out of the nine past *avataras*. He is considered the *Sampūrṇāvatāra*. Dr. Besant gives a beautiful picture of the coming of Krishna in human form 'When all these preparations were made for the coming of the child the child was born. I am not dwelling on all the well-known incidents that surrounded his birth, the prophecy that the destroyer of Kamsa was to be born, the futile shutting up in the dungeon, the chaining with irons, and all the other follies with which the earthly tyrant strove to make impossible of accomplishment the decree of the Supreme. You all know how his plans came to nothing as the mounds of sand raised by the hands of children are swept into a level plain with one wave of the sea ripples over the play ground of the child." It is this *avatara* that taught lasting truths for the world in the *Gita*. It is this *avatara* that intimated to the world the grace of God manifested in the shape of frequent appearances in human form of the one Supreme Soul. Until this announcement of the grace, people had excuse if being contemporaries of an *avatara* they were not able to realise the same. But after the announcement made in the *Gita* about the *avatara* descending on earth *yuga* after *yuga* if the contemporaries of an *avatara* are not able to know it, there is no excuse.

### PART III

#### An All Pervasive Religion

As I have said the Hindu religion is an all-pervasive, all-comprehensive, omni-penetrative religion. Religion

enters into the life of an individual community, state and as such it will be difficult to divorce religion from any kind of activity in the universe. This presents the grandest picture agreeably to the grand conception of the universe as the triple unity of God, Soul and Matter. When people proceed to build up compartmental systems in religion there arises the conflict between religion and non-religion and if not a real conflict at least a disastrous divorce of life from religion. This divorce naturally results in the followers of a faith drifting away from the precepts of their own religion. No religion is a religion which does not enter into the very life of an individual at every stage.

As I have said, the Hindu religion is an all-comprehensive religion. It comprises the life of a man as an individual, as a social being, as a political unit and as a unit in the creation itself. Every item is provided for in the shape of religious injunction. I will not tire your patience any longer by a full dissertation on the subject. I will suggest a reading of the Vishnu Purana. Let me however crave your indulgence for a few minutes by citing the injunctions in certain matters which will give you an idea as to the high standard set up for conduct in certain respects. There is an injunction as to giving a name for a new born baby. I will leave out the ceremonies of it but will inform you of a significant injunction, *viz.*, that the name shall be the name of a god. A name should not be devoid of any meaning, should not be indecent, absurd, inauspicious, or dreadful. Compare some English names like Hogg, Tiger, Fox, Cock, Pistol, Stone etc. The rule as to naming the Hindu is with the view that by calling him the caller may be unconsciously at least pronouncing the name of God just as some Christian names convey high spiritual ideas. A word about the rules of hospitality. After giving directions for

religious offering of oblations the house-holder is enjoined to do as follows. "I offer this food on the ground for them who have got no mother, no father, no friends, no food, nor the means of preparing it. May they be satisfied with the food offered for their satisfaction. All these animals, this food and myself are at one with Vishnu. For, there exists nothing but Vishnu. I am not different from all beings and therefore for their sustenance I offer this food. May all beings that belong to the fourteen orders of existing things be satisfied and delighted with the food offered by me ... .... Thereupon to receive guests, the house-holder should wait in the court-yard of his house as long as it takes to milch a cow or for a longer time if he pleases. If a guest comes, he must be received with all hospitality and offered a seat. His feet must be washed Food should be respectfully given to him. He must be spoken to with all kindness, and when he goes away the friendly wishes of the host must accompany him. The house hold should pay attention to that guest who comes from another place and whose lineage is not known. He who feeds himself neglecting a guest who is not his relation who comes from another place and is desirous of eating goes to hell. The householder should receive his guest regarding him as the golden embryo without enquiring his studies, his schools, his practice or race .... The guest who goes disappointed elsewhere from any house transfers his own sins to the owner of the house and takes away the householder's merits. Brahma, Prajapati, Indra, Agni, the Vasus, and the Sun are present in the person of the guest and share the food that is offered to him. Therefore a man should assiduously satisfy the duties of hospitality, for a man who eats his food without giving any to his guest feeds only upon his own sin." I will not narrate to you the various punishments undergone in the hell for the several sins of omission and commission in

the acts of hospitality. Another set of moral rules. "He who does not vilify another, either in his presence or in his absence, who does not speak untruth, does not injure others, pleases Kesava the best. Kesava is best pleased with him who does not covet another's wife, wealth, and who does not bear ill-feeling towards any. Kesava is pleased with him who neither beats nor slays any animate thing. Govinda is pleased with that man who is ever intent upon serving the gods, the Brahmans and his spiritual preceptor. Hari is always satisfied with him who is ever anxious for the welfare of all creatures, his children and his soul. Vishnu is always pleased with that pure-minded man whose mind is not sullied with anger and other passions."

Next after the individual duties the sastras provide for the duties of the society.

But as the society is deemed in the terms of the four castes and those outside the castes I do not think it necessary to go through those injunctions in this age when the society has been turned upside down by the tide of times.

### **Test Of True Religion.**

A religion to be really a religion ought not only deal with high plane theology or perplexing metaphysics but must enter like God into every particle of life of an individual, the society in which he is a factor and the state which holds the secular governance under the direction of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings: In other words a true religion will be an omni-pervasive, omni-penetrative and all-embracing truth. Literally religion is that which binds and how can anything bind unless every activity in the universe be it one of an individual or of society or the state is regulated by rules which are traceable to the Great Architect and Ruler of the self-same

universe? Those to whom religion means all this and who act in this faith prosper, their individual life attains the spiritual elevation so needed for personal salvation. Their society or nation keeps the purity of atmosphere which the individual has to breathe. Their state maintains the equilibrium so essential for the spiritual path of its subjects. Herein lies the true trusteeship of the king or ruler in a state. If such ideals are ignored, if religion comes to be regarded as nothing more than an item of fashion, if religion comes to be deemed an embarrassment, if it comes out of the precincts of a holiday recreation, if the followers of a religion drift away from the precepts of their faith in the suicidal belief that religion has no place in the daily life then there is really no religion for them and calamities will be the consequences.

Viewed in this aspect the Hindu religion satisfies the tests of a true religion in a manner which is peculiarly and pre-eminently its own. This religion teaches that in every smallest act of an individual God expresses himself. Hence it follows that the presence of God must be felt in every little act. Every act of an individual day after day from his rise from the bed up to his going to bed again is regulated by its appropriate religious injunction. King Sagara asks of the sage Aura 'O Muni, I wish to hear from you of such religious observances performing which a householder does not meet with the wane of piety either in this world or in the next" To this the sage Aura gives a detailed answer. I will give you a few indications only and leave you to read the answer in full from Vishnu Purana. "Let the wise get up at Brāhma-muhūrta (two hours before sunrise) when the mind is at rest, meditate upon virtue and wealth not incompatible with the former, and desire not incompatible with either of the two. He must contemplate on the three ends of

life for the purpose of counteracting the unforeseen consequences of good or bad acts. He must first offer adoration to the Sun. Bathed and clad in clean clothes he must offer oblations to the Rishis, Pitris &c. He should offer water to the celestials for the benefit of all animals reciting the prayer—"May the Celestials, Demons, Yakshas, Serpents, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Pisachas, Guhyakas, Siddhas, Kushmandas, trees, birds, fish, all that inhabit the waters, or the earth or the air, be propitiated by this water I have offered to them. This water is presented by me for the mitigation of the sufferings of all those who have been put to hell. Let them be propitiated by this water those who are my friends those who are not my friends, those who were my friends in the former birth and all those who expect water from me. May this water and sesamum offered by me remove the hunger and thirst of all those who are suffering therefrom wherever they may live."

Having offered water to all the sinless man attains piety that comes from satisfying all the world. ... After several other oblations the householder must cast some food on a clean spot of ground as an offering to all beings and with a collected mind must offer the following prayer. "May celestials, men, animals, birds, saints, yakshas, nagas, demons, ghosts, goblins, trees, and all those who desire food from me, ants, worms, moths, and other insects who are hungry and chained in acts, obtain satisfaction from food offered by me and enjoy bliss. I offer this food on the ground for them who have got no mother, no father, no friends, no food, nor the means for preparing it. May they be satisfied with the food offered for their satisfaction. All these animals, this food and myself are at one with Vishnu—for there exists nothing but Vishnu, I am not different from all beings and therefore for their sustenance I offer this food. May all beings that belong



to the fourteen orders of existence be satisfied and delighted with the food offered by me. He must then disperse food to outcasts, degraded persons etc. Then he must receive guests and see in their persons Brahma, Prajapati Indra, Agni, the Vasus, the Sun etc., and feel that they all share in the food offered to the guests. When one takes his food he must first take five handfuls for the nutriment of the vital principle. After taking food he must meditate as follows. "May fire excited by air cause this food to digest in the space afforded by the ethereal atmosphere, convert this into the earthly elements of this body and give me satisfaction. May this food when assimilated contribute to the vigour of the earth water, fire, and air of my body and afford unmixed satisfaction. May Vishnu who is the chief principle of all senses of all bodies and souls be propitiated with my faith and may cause such assimilation of the food I have eaten as may invigorate my health. Verily Vishnu is the eater, the food and the nourishment." In this manner every act of an individual, every collective act of a community, every act of a king are regulated by religious injunctions both mandatory and recommendatory. The general principles may be gathered from the following sayings. 1. Whatever a man desires either small or great he gets by the worship of Achyuta, 2. He is the true worshipper of Vishnu who observes truly the duties of his own asrama, 3. He who offers sacrifices to him: 4. He who injures living beings injures God, 5. Hari is identical with all living beings, 6. He who does not speak untruth, does not injure others, pleases Kesava the best. Thus by these precepts the idea is best inculcated that as a rule of conduct one should take the entire universe as identical with God. Compare what Mahatmaji has revealed. "God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express himself in every smallest act of his votary ... Such testimony is found

in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself." If in every little act he sees and realises his responsibility to serve God through His creation he feels his littleness or *alpatvam* and *anutvam*, if he realises a satisfaction and peace by the discharge of a duty then ensures his spiritual elevation. Yet in such innumerable karmas or actions he must have no thought of rewards. A *nishkama-karma* is the only karma that creates no bondage and chain. It is this truth that the whole universe is God and that every little service is a service to God that is inculcated by Hinduism. If this is understood and followed there is a harmonious co-ordination of services and aids to the attainment of bliss in the Kingdom of God. If an earthly empire is governed by one law and all sub-ordinate local and provincial laws are based on that one main law so also the law of God *Jus Divinum* is the law to which all other laws must be carefully attained to produce that harmony and bliss.

Society was conceived in the concepts of castes or *varnasrama* and *varnasrama-dharmas* or karmas were likewise regulated by religious rules. Now all that structure has been pulled down not by any extraneous forces but by the internal violations and the fall has been a result of self-damnation. Anyhow the *varnasramas* have become obsolete and there is not much use in my relating the dharmas that we have discarded suicidally and the observance of which might have averted the calamitous results.

It is sufficient to say that every community had its duties or dharmas prescribed carefully and so long as these duties were regularly discharged in the best interests of the society the entire structure was kept in a sound condition.

In this structure the king was given a high place and was described as being an *amsa* of God himself. నావిష్ణుః పృథివీ పతిః There was a king who was too much obsessed with this idea and his name was Vena. He said to the ascetics, "Who is there above me that even I shall have to worship him? Who is that person who is known as Hari and whom you all consider as the Lord of sacrifices? Brahma, Janardana Sambhu Indra, Vayu, Yama, Sun, Fire, Varuna, Dhata, Pusha, these and all others who are capable of imprecating curses and conferring boons do all exist in the person of a king for the essence of a sovereign is all that is divine. Understanding this full well do you all obey my commands. You should not make gifts or offer oblations to any one but me and should not worship anybody else." The ascetics were refused to offer sacrificial oblations to the deities. Thereupon the ascetics slew the king and installed another in his place. When Bharata met Sri Rama in the forest there is a long discourse on the duties of the king in the shape of queries and advice by Sri Rama to Bharata and the whole is worth reading carefully. Thus it was an integral part of religion that the King should render his duties religiously so as to promote the prosperity of people and enable each class to engage in its duties or dharma. It is therefore clear that Hinduism covers all aspects of life keeping up the ideal throughout that everything is traceable to God ultimately and that the salvation depends on the observance of the dharma by each class. Coming to later times Kautalya's Arthashastra lays down the duties of kings and the need for the maintenance of the virtue of saintliness in the king as the foundation. Speaking of the life of a saintly king he says "Hence by overthrowing the aggregate of the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and overjoy) he

shall restrain the organs of sense, acquire wisdom by keeping company with the aged, see through his spies, establish safety and security by being ever active, maintain his subjects in the observance of their respective duties by exercising authority, keep up his personal discipline by receiving lessons in the sciences, and endear himself to the people by bringing them in contact with wealth and doing good to them. Thus with his organs of sense under his control he shall keep away from hurting the women and property of others, avoid not only lustfulness even in dream but also falsehood, haughtiness and evil proclivities, and keep away from unrighteous and uneconomical transactions . . . . Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence he shall employ ministers and hear their opinion. . . . . Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity freedom from spite, abstinence from cruelty, and forgiveness are duties common to all. The observance of one's own duty leads one to svarga and infinite bliss. When it is violated, the world will come to an end owing to confusion of castes and duties. Hence the king shall never allow people to swerve from their duties. For, the world when maintained in accordance with injunctions of the triple Vedas will surely progress and never perish." Of those kings who do not understand and act up to this religious rule of conduct and have passed away the following account given in Vishnu Purana will be interesting.

"How greatly are the princes, although reasonable, mistaken that they consider themselves immortal when they themselves are but foam on the wave. Before they have subdued themselves they endeavour to reduce their ministers, their servants, their subjects to subjection, they then attempt to defeat their enemies. They say 'we shall by and by subdue the sea-girt earth.' Their minds being thus always taken up with those thoughts they cannot

perceive the near approach of death. The subjugation of the sea-girt earth is not so very difficult for him who has subdued himself. For, the final liberation is another fruit of self-control. It is through ignorance that the kings wish to possess me whom their predecessors have been constrained to leave and whom their father have not kept. Deceived by the selfish love of power fathers fight with sons and brothers with brothers for occupying me. All the kings who reigned on this earth and who are now dead foolishly thought 'All this earth is mine. Everything is mine. It will be my house for ever for he is dead.' How is it possible that such vain desires should be cherished by his descendants who have seen their progenitor, on account of the thirst for dominion, compelled to desert me, whom he called his own tread the path of dissolution. When I hear a king communicating to another through his ambassador.—'This earth is mine—you give up all your claims for it,—I laugh at first but that laughter is soon turned into pity for the infatuated fool.'

Duties of a king are according to Kautalya's Artha Sastra—"Of a King, the religious vow is his readiness to action, satisfactory discharge of duties in his performance of sanction, equal attention to all is the offer of fees and ablution towards consecration. In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness. In their welfare lies his welfare whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good."

It may now be asked what is the special merit of combining individual, social and political complications in the region of religion in which God and man alone must have a place. Now the question itself gives the answer. The concern of man to reach the dominion of God carries with it all the other elements without which

man is no man but is wiser than a brute. His spiritual elevation depends on his individual and social adjustments. The word religion means that which binds. What can bind if not the individual and social adjustments in harmony with the state also? Hindu joint family is defined as one in which the members have common living, common worship and common mess. Thus in each house it is expected that there must be individual, the small social and the spiritual common cause. This is the high ideal set up by the Hindu Religion and it will be a calumny if any one charges this sublime religion with want of moral codes or religious ideals.

### **Specialities of Hinduism.**

I may say a word about the specialities—I refrain from calling them the superiorities of Hinduism. The Religious texts of the Hindus deal with all phases of creation. They deal not only with the philosophical but with the geological, astronomical astrological, hygienic, and in fact all scientific phases of creation, manifest and unmanifest as well. Every aspect has been so interwoven with the spiritual aspect that a Hindu looks upon everything as religion proper and never swerves at a demarcation. Planetary phenomena like eclipses, the recurring full moons and new moons are viewed from a spiritual aspect and rituals are prescribed for observance on such days. The effects of planets and stars are reflected even in individual lives and appropriate ceremonies are prescribed for warding off the evil effects if any. The process of creation is dealt with geologically and scientifically even as scientists view at it. Rules of daily conduct, ablutions, baths and fasts are all placed on religio-hygienic bases. From the birth of a child up to death no less than sixteen ceremonies of varying degrees of importance are gone through with sacramental rites accompanied by congre-

gational blessings in the name of God. Now at the outset this picture of Hindu religion will startle a western philosopher and even anglicised Indian philosophers and they are apt to characterise the religion itself as a bundle of old fossils of the barbarian era. Institutionalism, conventionalism and sacramentalism have been the targets of attack even against religions which have only a small number of them. It will be no wonder if Hinduism which is so full of these features is subjected to ruthless attacks. This is no fitting occasion for me to go into a defence of the religion against such attacks. My object to-day is only to present the view point of the philosopher and not to meet that of the scientist or the materialist. Speaking of conventions Mr. Taylor in his lecture on the Faith of a Moralst pertinently remarks that such conventions exist even in the social habits of the ultra-materialist. He observes "There is a recognised ritual of the breakfast table, the dinner table, the drawing room embodied in the rules which we speak of sometimes as those of etiquette sometimes as those of civilised manners... ....That the members of a family for example should ask one another's health or greet one another with a kiss when they reassemble daily in the breakfast room is in itself only a piece of conventionalism, a bit of a ritual. But we know that disregard of the convention only too readily leads to a real preoccupation with self and a dulling of one's concern for the other members of the family group." Referring to the field of religion he observes "I need not particularise to make it obvious why importance should be attached to the fostering of true temper of worship by devices which aim at shutting out both the common place and the unworthy and so erecting an environment which makes it easier to maintain in the worshipping assembly the right and not a wrong mood of unworldiness."

But the speciality of the Hindu religion is that while the underlying principles are unchanging, the actual forms and rituals change from age to age from yuga to yuga agreeably to the psychology of the times. It is therefore not subject to the criticism that hide-bound immutable injunctions as to rites lead to a revolt to the opposite extreme of whimsical spontaneities of individuals. Opponents of religion are also found among the scientists who think their discoveries of the design give them the authority to deny the existence of a designer unless that designer also presents himself in the test tubes of their laboratory.

But considering how Darwinism has upset the thought of the enlightened in the western countries, it is also good to construe the avataras as symbolical representation of the theory of evolution as revealed in the Hindu scripture. Since the publication of the Darwin's Origin of the Species the western minds became so obsessed with the so-called science *vs* Religion controversy that the Holy Bible went in for an inordinate quantum of censure. Statistics are collected through the press how the impact of science has resulted in the disintegration of the church. Among the questionnaire we find a question, viz., Do you believe that Jesus Christ was divine in a sense in which all living men could not be said to be divine? Answer. 659 Yes. 1136 No. Most of the blame is thrown on the book of the Genesis wherein the world is said to have been created in seven or six days and the world was created in 4004 B.C. This said to be in conflict with both Darwin's process and the demands of the geologists as according to modern estimates there has been life on the planet for roughly twelve hundred millions of years and human life for about a million. Sir Edmund Gosse's father is reported to have reconciled the two, viz., the version of the Genesis and that of the scientists by saying that both are true because



while God created the world in seven days he filled the world with fossils in order to delude the scientists into a faith of gradual creation. Such defences make the case worse in the eye of the critics like Joad. According to the Hindu notion of creation the creation was gradual. The creation, dissolution and re-creation take place by gradual steps. We are told that we are now in the Swetavarahakalpa-Vaivaswatamanvantara Kali yuga-prathamapada. A kalpa (one day of Brahma) is equal to 4320 million years. In this kalpa we are in the Vaivaswata Manvantara, The process of creation according to the Hindu notion also supports the scientist instead of quarelling with him. Trees etc, were the first objects of creation, then the beings living according to nature, then the beings tending upwards called Urdhvasrotas, then finally human beings. There were also anthropoid apes like the Monkey warriors of Ramayana. And then the geological theory is also supported by the Hindu calculation. According to the Hindu texts it is 1843 and odd millions of years since the creation began for this kalpa as we are now in the seventh manvantara, and the process of creation is according to the Darwinian process if the Darwinians will correct their conjectures slightly in the light of the account given by the Hindu texts on the subject. But there is a substantial support given to the scientists by the Hindu texts on the subjects of creation. What is more, while the scientists were concerned with the visible objects in the creation, the Hindu texts deal with the invisible prior processes also. Then there is also the wonderful support which the scientists get from the ancient Hindu texts to the doctrine that matter evolves from its own inherent energy or force. The Vishnu Purana says 'In the matter of creation God was an instrument merely as the force inherent in the things created was the principal cause. Objects attain their objectivity by virtue of their

inherent force" Thus the scientist cannot bamboozle the Hindu doctrine as he does the Old Testament. If the scientist stops with a satisfaction that he has to some extent and only to some extent grasped the design in the creation and does not venture to criticise with no knowledge the unexplored regions of the design of the Omnipotent all-knowing God then there is no danger to the juvenile minds as regards religion. But if reputed authors without feeling the responsibility begin to caricature religious doctrines about heaven and hell then it is no wonder that ideas of frivolity are engendered in juvenile minds. For instance Joad in his book on 'The Present and Future of Religion' describes the ideas of heaven thus. "And what of the bliss unending. It has fared no better, the modern man finding the Church's picture of an after-life as unreal as it is unattractive. A more boring sort of life for the average Englishman it would be impossible to conceive With 'no huntin' 'no fishin', 'no motorin', 'no shootin', with nothing to frighten and nothing to kill, above all with no little round bits of matter to be fiercely or deliberately hit with long thin ones in the shape of bats, cues, clubs, mallets, or racquets, a heaven so ill-equipped cannot, it is obvious—be expected to appeal to the tastes of a sporting man. Women too are apt to find it lacking in emotional colour." The author after dealing with the disintegration of the church by the impact of science indulges in his own humour when he describes the future of the Church when he says "It is probable that the services of the English churches will still retain an interest for the overseas visitors for many years to come and it is quite conceivable that the Church in company with the House of Commons and the Royal family may ultimately be subsidised as a picturesque survival by a syndicate of American millionaires sentimentally anxious to retain links with the past." But

one may agree with Mr Joad when he insists on the need for individual thinking as regards religion. Blind faith in religion is a danger as education advances. He deploras the want of such individuality thus. "The average man does not make his religion any more than he makes his morals for himself. He does not even compare the various alternative systems of religions and morals that others have made and choose the one which suits him best. He gets his religious and ethical beliefs as he gets his boots and clothes ready made from the social shop upholding Christianity and monogamy instead of Allah and polygamy as the result of circumstances which are in the last resort purely topographical. That I believe in God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy ghost because I happen to have been born in a London bedroom and not in a forest hut or a Chinese palace is a reflection prejudicial to the dignity of the human mind and is therefore rarely made." We the members of the league are free from this blame as we have seriously been making comparative study of religions without the least bias one way or other.

Too much of individualism will lead to the sophistic doctrine "*Homo mensura rerum*" man is the measure of the universe. That will not serve a good purpose if purpose there be in thinking out for one self. Revelations made by sages adept in that direction cannot be discarded even as you do not discard the discoveries of science on the score that every one is not able to follow the process by which they were reached.

But Hinduism is not solely dependent on revelation and faith in the words of the recipient of the revelation. Ways and means are supplied for testing the accuracy of the revealed matter even as a scientist will provide the means for testing the accuracy of his discoveries. If an

indolent man will simply sit at the marina listening to the songs reproduced by radio and will not distrust the principle enunciated by the scientist why then should the same indolent man demand proof of the revelation in religion alone sitting hands folded in his easy chair. Did not Dhruva a boy of seven draw the Almighty to his presence by undergoing the prescribed ordeals? In fact the truth of the revelations have often been brought to practical test by sages who were prepared for the sacrifices and privations necessary for the test. As Mr. Taylor says "It is because we find Shakespeare's surprises at once so surprising and yet so true to the human nature of which we independently know something that we accept them even when they surprise us most utterly as divinations into a reality not as fanciful distortions of it. In the same way if there is a doctrine of God claiming to rest on genuine revelation which provides us with surprises but surprises recognisable as coup, though not antecedently as inevitable, as of one piece with though not discoverable from that which a strictly natural theology can tell us of the divine character, there should be no rational objection against the acceptance of such a doctrine as a further and fuller disclosure of the divine nature and the recognition of divine self-manifestation as its source. 'To Moses', Says Spinoza, "God spoke face to face but to Christ he spoke mind to mind". What objection can there be to the acceptance of such portion of the truths as God might have chosen to communicate to his chosen messengers.

It cannot therefore be denied that the revelations of every religion are true in so far as they go. As Mr. Taylor again observes there is no sufficient reason to deny the presence again in different degrees of a genuine revelational element in them all. He adds that it will be equally conceivable that there should be or actually is an

which forms on the canvas of eternity the inevitable crooked and unconnected lines of the self-conflict and self-cancelment of daily life and obliterates that which is accidental and transcient and thus a perfect synthesised and compact image of those who are worthy of our reverence comes to live for ever... Realising in his soul the genius of India he has descended into the area to make a new epoch with the unequalled power of his *tapasya*... .. The manifestation of this power in human history. In the world of changing needs the stream of continuous change flows on. But the glory of a great life which has to-day been revealed to our gaze transcending all these needs—may we learn to respect that greatness. ... It is this figure of the *sadhaka* effulgent with this spirit which stands on the pedestal of eternity. ... It may be borne in mind that the supreme test of manhood lies in battling against inner enemies. Heroism of such high quality is not required in fighting external foes. He whom we honour to-day has victoriously stood this test."

What then is the voice that you now hear? "I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever-dying there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing power or Spirit is GOD. And since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist He alone is.

And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it is purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists, hence I gather that God is life-Truth-Light. He is love. He is the supreme good. ...I know too that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life

which must exist before we can discern the truth and magnificence of the revelation and the revealing medium. This is learnt both by intuition and experience. The revealing agent shines forth with all the essence of Divinity and the mortal garb put on is such a thin film that it does not veil the essence within.

We have therefore to guide ourselves by the several revelations without discarding any revelation but understanding them aright. God is not a God of Hindus alone, not of India alone but of all races and all countries. Revelation of God wherever made contains holy truths. Truths can never differ though understanding may differ. Even Bhagavad Gita was not understood rightly by all and there has therefore been a fresh light thrown on the correct meaning of the great Gita.

Who can throw such light if not a messenger of God to use a common expression which all faiths understand?

### **Universal revelation.**

To those who desire to have a religion without rituals or conventions, who wish to have a religion without sacraments a religion which is in no sense onesided, there is the messenger, call him an avatar if you will or the son of God reappearing as Rev. Holmes would say or a Tapasvi and Sadhaka in the words of the great Poet Sir Rabindranath Tagore—there he is with us and before us. Listen to that voice for purity, simplicity, lucidity and sublimity. I refer to that voice because it is the voice of the greatest Visishtadvaitin, the greatest vaishnava in fact the voice of Maha Vishnu Himself. What does the great Poet say? We belittle that deathless personalities which stand out in perspective against the back-ground of eternity. We pass final judgment on their greatness according to the standard of our immediate requirements. God wipes out from the picture

itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become the near to God I feel myself to be. How much more should I be near to Him when my faith is not a mere apology as it is to-day but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks." This message reminds me what Sri Rama said ఆత్మానం మానవం మన్యే రామం ధశరథాత్మజం I think I am a man and son of Dasaratha.

The least is always the greatest. The subtlest becomes the grossest and the grossest becomes the subtlest. That is the mystery.

The purest wants to become purer, the All-knowing desires to know more, If the purest desires to become purer how much more should be the desire of the impure to become pure, and the man in the dark to get the light, there is a great deal in this revelation which the future Bhashyakar may draw out. The more it is shook it shines.

But even to our limited capacity it affords the best guidance and the more we read and re-read the more will be the light which even we may get. We command the advantage which the future generation may not have viz., the advantage of seeing the truths demonstrated by example. To us the whole thing is history though to the future it may become even an allegory.

If instantaneous crucifixion has not conferred an ever enduring purity on the world let us hope that prolonged and procrastinating crucifixion at least will leave the world better, purer and nobler.

Those who have eyes to see will see ,  
 Those who have ears to hear will hear ,  
 Those who have the mind to know will know ,  
 Blessed are they that see, hear and know.

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